

**City of Warwick Planning Board
Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday, June 8, 2011

Members Present: Thomas Kiernan
Sue Stenhouse
James Desmarais
Vincent Gambardella
Leah Prata
Cynthia Gerlach
Laura Pisatauro

Members Absent: John J. Mulhearn Jr, Chairman
Philip Slocum

Also in attendance: Diana Pearson, Solicitor

Vincent Gambardella, acting as Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 6:05 P.M.

On the motion of Ms. Stenhouse, seconded by Mr. Desmarais, the Planning Board voted unanimously to approve the April 2011, meeting minutes.

Public Meeting

Request for an Amendment to the City's Zoning Ordinance

Applicant: Apponaug Area Improvement Association
Location: Apponaug Village
Assessor's Plat: Portion of 245
Assessor's Lots: See attached Exhibit B (Map of Apponaug Village)
Existing Zones: General Business and Office, with a Historic Overlay
Proposed Zone: Village District (V)

Applicant: Apponaug Area Improvement Association
Location: Apponaug Village
Assessor's Plat: Portion of 245
Assessor's Lots: See attached Exhibit B (Map of Apponaug Village)
Existing Zones: General Business and Office, with a Historic Overlay
Proposed Zone: Village District (V)

Mr. Gambardella read the project background into the record. It is as follows:

The Apponaug Area Improvement Association (AAIA) and Conimicut Village Association are requesting a zone change for the areas depicted on Exhibits A and B (attached). The proposed zone change includes both a text amendment and two zoning map amendments. The effected areas are currently zoned General Business, Office, Residential A-7 and Residential A-10, with Apponaug Village also having a Historic Overlay designation.

The proposal to create a new Village District Zone was developed at the request of the Apponaug Area Improvement Association (AAIA) and the Conimicut Village Association in consultation with The Cecil Group with funding from the City's Community Development Office. The proposed zoning provides for mixed use development intended to revitalize the economic base and improve the appearance of property within the Apponaug and Conimicut villages. The proposed zoning has been designed to encourage small business development while respecting the unique attributes of our existing villages by easing the regulatory burdens and respecting the existing building form by revising dimensional setback and parking requirements and allowing and multiple uses within a single building by right. The proposal also contains design standards to create a specific appearance in keeping with the architectural character and features of a village center.

After Mr. Gabardella concluded reading the background information, Mr. DePasquale explained the history of the proposal to the Board Member and read a prepared statement regarding Village District Zoning.

After Mr. DePasquale's presentation concluded, Ms. Pisatauro asked if this new zoning would make more properties non-conforming.

Mr. DePasquale replied that it would ease dimension requirements and enhance the ability of the community to develop.

Ms. Stenhouse stated that she truly appreciates this proposal and that when she served as a Councilperson, her constituents would have appreciated an effort like this. She stated that for the time and cost savings alone this is a good proposal. Ms. Stenhouse supports this one hundred percent.

Mr. Gambardella asked if there were any efforts to establish a community parking area. Ms. Reynolds responded that parking was allowed in the new use table as a primary use in the Village District zone.

Ms. Stenhouse asked why manufacturing wasn't allowed in the use table, that it seems like people should be able to get the same type of support for manufacturing uses.

Mr. DePasquale responded that in considering the allowable uses in a Village Zone, the general manufacturing was not considered suitable.

Ms. Stenhouse asked if it would be possible to mandate installing underground utilities, both for aesthetics and safety.

All agreed that this would be an ideal solution, but that it would be very difficult with the existing development patterns in both Apponaug and Conimicut Villages.

Being no more comments or questions from the Board, Mr. DePasquale read the Planning Department's Findings and Recommendation into the record, as follows:

Planning Department Findings

The Planning Department finds the proposed zone change to be in compliance with the City's Comprehensive Plan and the principles as proposed in the Comprehensive Plan update, including the Goals and Policies Statement, the Implementation Program, the Land Use Element, the Housing Element and the Economic Development Element, including, but not limited to, the following:

- To promote an economic climate which increases quality job opportunities and overall economic well being of each municipality and the state.
- Assist in forming an economic base capable of providing a desirable standard of living, creating job opportunities, and fulfilling reasonable government tax needs.
- Provide sites suitable for various commercial and industrial activities in relation to projected needs within Warwick's land use planning program

The Planning Department also finds the proposed zoning amendment to be generally consistent with the following purposes of the City's Zoning Ordinance, as presented in Section 100, "Title and Purpose."

103.1 Promote the public health, safety and general welfare of the City.

103.2 Provides for a range of uses and intensities of use appropriate to the character of the City and reflect current and future needs.

103.3 Provides for orderly growth and development, which recognizes:

- A.) The goals and patterns of land use contained in the Comprehensive Plan of the City of Warwick.
- E.) The availability and capacity of existing and planned public and/or private services and facilities.
- F.) The need to shape and balance urban and suburban development.
- G.) The use of innovative development regulations and techniques.

103.8 Promote a balance of housing choices, for all income levels and groups, to assure the health, safety and welfare of all citizens and their rights to affordable, accessible, safe, and sanitary housing, including opportunities for the establishment of low and moderate income housing.

103.10 Promote a high level of quality in design in the development of private and public facilities.

103.13 Provide for efficient review of development proposals, to clarify and expedite the zoning approval process.

The Planning Department's recommendation was for a favorable recommendation to the Warwick City Council for the requested zoning amendment and map amendments.

A motion was made by Ms. Stenhouse to accept the Planning Department's finding and recommendation and to forward a favorable recommendation to the City Council for the requested zoning amendment and map amendments. The motion was seconded by Ms. Prata. All voted in favor, none opposed.

Mr. Slocum made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:55pm. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gambardella. All voted in favor, none opposed.